



# Department of Justice

STEVEN M. DETTELBACH  
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

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[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV)

Mike Tobin, USAO  
216-622-3651

Vicki Anderson, FBI  
216-522-1400

Nicole Disanto, Cuyahoga County  
216-698-2819

## **CHARGES FILED AGAINST RING THAT STOLE AUTOS AND CARGO THEN SCRAPPED AND DISPOSED OF THEM AT NORTHEAST OHIO LOCATIONS**

Five men from Northeast Ohio were charged in a 15-count federal indictment that alleges they were involved in a conspiracy that trafficked in stolen vehicles, backhoes, steel, scrap metal and other objects through a chop shop and a scrap-metal yard in Cleveland, law enforcement officials said today.

Related charges were filed in state court against nine men.

Those indicted in federal court are:

- ☐ Nayyir Mahdi, aka "Willie Jones," 42, of Shaker Heights, who operated Express Metals on East 152<sup>nd</sup> Street and, before that, at 14915 Woodworth Ave., both in Cleveland. Mahdi was in the business of selling scrapped metal, according to court documents.
- ☐ Davies Pierce, aka "Duffy," 52, of Cleveland, who owned and operated Duffy's Towing at 7810 Colfax Road. Pierce salvaged autos for scrap metal, according to court documents.
- ☐ Mark Brown, 46, of Cleveland, owned and operated Kram and Kram at 1396 East 55<sup>th</sup> Street. Brown scrapped vehicles for vehicle parts, according to court documents.
- ☐ Lindsey Blackmon, 48, of Cleveland, and other co-conspirators obtained a location at 19210 Miles Road, Warrensville Heights, Ohio, to be used as a chop shop, according to court documents.
- ☐ Gilbert Evans, Jr., aka "Grasshopper," 47, of Cleveland.

“These defendants ended up with semi-trucks or pickups that were stolen from parking lots and other places,” said Steven M. Dettelbach, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. “This indictment lays out a conspiracy that included thefts in Warrensville Heights, Willoughby, Mentor, Euclid, Elyria and a slew of other locations.”

“These defendants collectively represent one of the largest vehicle and cargo-theft operations in Northern Ohio in the last five years,” said Stephen D. Anthony, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Cleveland. “The FBI and our Organized Crime Task Force partners will continue our efforts to detect and dismantle these illegal enterprises which negatively impact our economy and our citizens.”

Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason said: “The State Highway Patrol and FBI did a tremendous job uncovering this criminal theft ring.”

Curtis Wilder and John Jones, previously convicted in federal court, and others, broke into and stole motor vehicles throughout Northeast Ohio. Between June 2011 and March 2012, they brought the stolen vehicles to Brown, Pierce and Mahdi. The Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) were then removed from the vehicles, parts were stripped from the vehicle and sold, and the rest of the vehicles were crushed and sold for scrap, according to the indictment.

Some of the co-conspirators brought stolen vehicles to Brown, who stripped the autos of parts, including rims and catalytic converters, before towing the vehicles to Pierce’s shop on Colfax Road, where they were destroyed and scrapped, according to the indictment.

Blackmon and others would spot and steal loads of cargo after truck drivers parked their rigs. The tractor, trailer and loads of cargo were then brought to Express Metals, operated by Mahdi, and to Pierce’s scrap yard, where the stolen cargo was broken down, according to the indictment.

On March 4, 2012, Blackmon, Evans, Brown and others possessed a shipment of steel coils worth about \$120,000 that were stolen from a Ramada Inn in Elyria. The steel was being shipped to Michigan from Twinsburg, Ohio, according to the indictment.

One month earlier, Blackmon, Pierce, Brown and others, possessed steel beams worth \$18,700, a 2007 Kenworth semi-truck and a 2005 Eagle flatbed which had been stolen in the vicinity of Streetsboro, Ohio, while being used in interstate commerce between Twinsburg, Ohio and Virginia, according to the indictment.

The charges in federal court include conspiracy, operating a chop shop, altering VINs, theft and possession of stolen cargo and other charges. Brown is also charged with obstruction and making false statements.

In related cases, the following charges were filed in state court by Prosecutor Mason’s office:

- Ben Javan McWilson AKA “Vanni”, 37, of Maple Heights: engaging in pattern of corrupt activity, conspiracy, grand theft motor vehicle, receiving stolen property, breaking and entering, insurance fraud and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.
- Marcus M. McWilson, 34, of Maple Heights: engaging in pattern of corrupt activity, conspiracy, grand theft motor vehicle, receiving stolen property, breaking and entering, insurance fraud and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.

- Michael L. Brantley, 39, of Cleveland: engaging in pattern of corrupt activity, conspiracy, receiving stolen property, breaking and entering, insurance fraud and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.
- Lee Dickson AKA “Sho-Nuff”, 40, of Cleveland: engaging in pattern of corrupt activity, conspiracy, grand theft motor vehicle, receiving stolen property and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.
- Ronal L. Brannon AKA “Hump”, 39, of Cleveland: conspiracy and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.
- Edmond C. “Cris” Bouldin, 42, of Cleveland: conspiracy, insurance fraud and fraudulent actions concerning a VIN.
- Lavelle Heard, 37, of Cleveland: conspiracy and insurance fraud.
- Charunz Williams, 48, of Maple Heights: receiving stolen property, grand theft motor vehicle and insurance fraud.
- Tyrone L. Dickerson AKA “T-Bone”, 50, of Maple Heights: receiving stolen property, fraudulent actions concerning a VIN and insurance fraud.

If convicted, the defendants’ sentence will be determined by the court after a review of factors unique to this case, including the defendants’ prior criminal record, if any, the defendants’ roles in the offense and the characteristics of the violation. The sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum and in most cases will be less than the maximum.

This case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Gary D. Arbeznik following an investigation by the FBI’s Organized Crime Task Force, which includes the FBI, Ohio State Highway Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Cleveland Division of Police. The Cuyahoga County Sheriff’s Office assisted with making arrests this morning.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilty. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.